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February 22, 2006

Jerry Read, Director (A)  
Corrections Standards Authority  
600 Bercut Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Read,

This is in response to your letter of February 7, 2006 regarding Pandemic Influenza planning and how it affects the state prisons. I will endeavor to answer your questions from the local health officer point of view. However, I strongly recommend that you send your questions and my answers to your legal advisors to ensure that they agree with our interpretations. If they do not, please ask them to communicate their disagreement to the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO).

It is our understanding that the local health officer does have jurisdiction over every entity that is located within the boundaries of his/her operational area. That would include state prisons and state juvenile facilities. In addition, these facilities are required by law to report all reportable diseases and conditions to the local health authority. Local Public Health is responsible for ensuring that containment of disease is accomplished. We do not have the resources necessary to achieve the containment using public health staff; however, we provide assessment, analysis, and guidance to the medical professionals in our community (including those who work for state prisons and state juvenile facilities), so that they can accomplish the response using their own resources.

Local health departments work as the operational arm of the State Department of Health Services. When necessary, we seek guidance and advice from the State DHS. Regarding Pandemic Flu preparedness, it would be advisable for the medical directors of each facility to contact the local health officer of the jurisdiction in which the facility resides, in order to coordinate planning activities. Given everybody's limited resources, it is likely that the local health department would provide guidance and information, but require the staff of the correctional facility to develop and implement their own plan and preparedness activities.

In the past, the Corrections Standards Authority had a Public Health unit that interacted with local public health, and provided guidance to individual facilities about

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issues concerning communicable diseases. This unit was disbanded several years ago. At the time, CCLHO expressed its concern and opinion that this action was ill advised in the attached letter. We suggest that you consider reinstituting such a unit within your organization.

If you have any other questions, please contact us.

Sincerely,

*(Original signed by:)*

Glennah Trochet, M.D.  
President, CCLHO

Attachment

cc. Sandra Shewry, Director  
California Department of Health Services

Mark Horton, M.D., M.S.P.H.  
State Public Health Officer  
California Department of Health Services